

**MontCAS**  
**Montana Comprehensive Assessment System**  
**October 2009 Newsletter**

**2009-2010 MontCAS Testing Windows**

October 19 - November 20, 2009	English Language Proficiency (ELP), Grades K-12
February 9 - March 24, 2010	CRT-Alternate, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math; Grades 4, 8, and 10, Science.
March 1 - March 24, 2010	CRT, Grades 3-8 and 10, Reading and Math; Grades 4, 8, and 10, Science.



**A Combined Assessment and 2010 MontCAS Test Administration  
 Training Conference Featuring**

**Dr. Gerald W. Bracey, an international expert on educational research and statistics.**

- Dr. Bracey will open the conference on Thursday, January 28 with a keynote address on understanding data and its use.

Information about Dr. Bracey can be found at the assessment conference link:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/AssessConf/Index.html>

- January 28-29, 2010, Red Lion Colonial, Helena
- Sessions on assessment and data topics and training for the 2010 MontCAS test administration.
- Begins with registration and breakfast at 7:15 am on Thursday, January 28 and concludes after lunch at 1:30 pm on Friday, January 29.

- Breakfasts, lunches, and breaks will be provided.
- A block of rooms at a special rate at the Red Lion has been reserved. Please contact the Red Lion to make your reservation:
  - 406-443-2100 or [www.redlion.com](http://www.redlion.com)
  - The group code is ASSE0127 and must be included in your reservation to receive the conference rate.
- Early registration fee is \$60. After January 5, the registration fee is \$70.
- Please go online to register.  
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/AssessConf/Index.html>
- Conference support is provided by Montana State University Conference Services Department. Please contact them at 406 994-3333 or [stephanie.stratton@montana.edu](mailto:stephanie.stratton@montana.edu) with any registration questions.
- Refunds for registration must be requested in writing and received by January 14, 2010 for a refund of the registration fee, minus a \$25 administrative fee. No refunds will be approved for requests received after January 14, 2010.
- Montana educators are invited to submit proposals for presentations by December 20, 2009 at the following site:  
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/AssessConf/Index.html>



**FAME: Formative Assessment for Montana Educators** is an online class presented by the Office of Public Instruction in partnership with UCLA/CRESST and Education Northwest.

- The class began in August and consists of presentation sessions, structured learning communities, and conversations within learning communities through online networks.
- The presentation sessions are recorded and posted online the Monday following each session. You may consider using these sessions and forming learning communities in your schools around them.
  - For more information, please contact Judy Snow, [jsnow@mt.gov](mailto:jsnow@mt.gov) or 406-444-3656.
- Links to the recorded sessions, information about the class, and the syllabus are at the class site: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Heritage.html>

### Online Writing Programs

- Four online writing programs for formative assessment are being piloted in Montana schools in the 2009-2010 school year. These pilots are presented by the Office of Public Instruction in partnership with the Board of Public Education.



- The purpose of the pilots is to determine their usefulness in formative assessment for writing.
- The pilot projects include professional development, immediate feedback for students and teachers, and strategies to improve writing.
- The year-long project includes 521 students in grades 5-9 in ten Montana schools.
- The schools in the pilot program will collaborate on a final report to be presented to the Board of Public Education in July 2010.
- Representatives from the participating schools will take part in a panel discussion during the November 5, 2009 FAME presentation. That presentation will be posted online on Monday, November 9 on the class site:  
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Heritage.html>
- In addition, representatives from the participating schools and the programs will present a demonstration and panel discussion at the January 28-29, 2010 assessment conference.

### **Test Coordinator Information**

If your system has a new test coordinator this school year, please contact the Office of Public Instruction assessment staff with updated contact information. Please provide the test coordinator's name, email address, phone number, shipping address, and mailing address. OPI assessment staff contact information is at the end of this newsletter. Test Coordinator Information is also collected with schools' data during the OPI's Annual Data Collection (ADC).



## **CRT and CRT-Alternate**



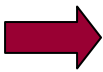
### **Planning Ahead for Special Needs**

Fall is the time of year to review IEPs, determine accommodations that will be used in classroom and assessments, register students for the CRT-Alternate, and order Braille and large-print versions of the CRT.

#### **IEPs and Accommodations**

Thanks to Frank Podobnik, OPI Division of Special Education for contributing to the following information.

Each student with a disability must have in place an IEP or 504 plan which describes how the student will participate in the annual statewide assessment. All students with disabilities must participate in the statewide assessment if they are in grades 3 through 8 or grade 10. Most students with disabilities will participate in the CRT using no accommodations or using the standard accommodations available to all students. A few students, because of their unique needs, will take the CRT using non-standard accommodations. It is important for special education case managers to review the IEP determinations for all students with disabilities to ensure that the appropriate accommodations will be available during the testing window for each student.



→ The *CRT Test Coordinator's Manual* and *Accommodations Manual* describe the various types of standard and non-standard accommodations which are available for students during the testing. Keep in mind that the specific accommodations to be used with a student with disabilities must be determined by the IEP or 504 Plan team. The following guidelines apply to all situations in which accommodations are used.

- It is important that the accommodations used during the testing session reflect the strategies that are used with the student on a daily basis. This means the types of accommodations listed for the student's test participation should be the same types of accommodations that are used with the student in the classroom setting.
- It does no good to apply an accommodation for the testing session that has not been shown to be helpful to the student previously or to which the student is not routinely accustomed.
- The testing setting is not the place to introduce new strategies to the student. It will not help the student perform, will not lead to valid test results, and could be a disadvantage to the student.

→ The *Accommodations Manual* for the 2010 CRT will be sent to all systems in February 2010 and discussed at the 2010 assessment conference. The approved accommodations will remain the same; however, more specific clarification of some accommodations will be included. For clarification about accommodations for IEP or other students prior to February, please contact Karen Richem ([krichem@mt.gov](mailto:krichem@mt.gov) or 406-444-0748) or Judy Snow ([jsnow@mt.gov](mailto:jsnow@mt.gov) or 406-444-3656).

### **Registration for the CRT-Alternate**

A very small percentage of the population will be administered the CRT-ALT. This form of the CRT is only available to students who have an IEP and who meet the criteria as a student with a significant cognitive disability.

The case managers need to notify the system test coordinator as soon as possible of the students at each grade level that need to be administered the CRT-ALT. The materials for the CRT-ALT take time to produce, and it is important that this task is not put off until the last minute.

On page 5 is a table with the registration windows for students eligible for the CRT-Alternate. It is extremely important that you register students currently enrolled in the first window. After December 1, the windows are specifically for students newly enrolled in your schools.

- Registering your currently enrolled students who are eligible for the CRT-Alternate is essential for the production of the materials kits and other test administration materials and for teacher preparation with the materials.
- All students who are eligible for the CRT-Alternate must be registered for the 2010 administration including students who have been registered for and taken the CRT-Alternate in previous years.

→ Guidelines for eligibility for the CRT-Alternate are online at  
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/PDF/Assessment/CRT/TA/09CRTAltGuidance.pdf>

#### Registration Windows

October 12 - December 1, 2009	For students currently enrolled in your school
January 4 - January 15, 2010	For students who enroll in your school after December 1, 2009
After January 15, 2010	For students who enroll after January 15, 2010, please contact Judy Snow 406-444-3656 <a href="mailto:jsnow@mt.gov">jsnow@mt.gov</a>

#### Registration Details

##### *New This Year*

- Rosters of registered students can be printed at the registration site.
- Rosters of registered students can be viewed, deleted, or edited until the deadline.
- Roster information can be sorted before printing.

##### *Other Details*

- To access registration, use the MARS user name and password for your system.  
<http://iServices.MeasuredProgress.org>
- Select "Montana" or "Montana Alternate Assessment"
- Full instructions are at the following link:  
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/Assessment/CRT/TA/10AltRegInstruc.pdf>

#### → Braille Versions of the CRT

- The CRT is available in a Braille version, but because it is a lengthy process to produce the Braille version, all orders for it must be complete by November 5, 2009.
- Please check with your Special Education Directors/teachers and schools to determine if you have a student (s) in your system who requires the Braille version in grades 3 - 8 or 10.
- **Order deadline: November 5, 2009.** Please contact Gayle Allen at OPI (406-444-3511 or [gallen2@mt.gov](mailto:gallen2@mt.gov)) with the following information: state student ID, grade, school, number of copies for each. We do not need the name of the student.

#### → Large Print Versions of the CRT

- System test coordinators order the large print versions online  
<http://iservices.measuredprogress.org>
  - Choose Montana and click Enter
  - Choose "Order Large Print Test Booklets"
- You will need state student ID, grade, and school for each student requiring the large print version.
- **Order deadline: January 22, 2010.**

## CRT and CRT-Alternate Spring 2009 Results

Reading and Math results for grades 3-8 and 10 and Science results for grades 4, 8, and 10 are posted on MARS on the secure Measured Progress site: <http://iServices.MeasuredProgress.org>



- To access the results, choose "Montana" or "Montana ALT".
- Use your MARS user name and password.
- An introduction and review webinar of MARS is online <http://connect.opi.mt.gov/p54135371/>
- The form to request additional MARS training is also online. You may request online as well as on site training. <http://www.opi.mt.gov/PUB/PDF/Assessment/Forms/TrainRqst.pdf>

**Printed Parent/Student Reports** and cumulative file labels for Reading and Math in grades 3-8 and 10 and Science in grades 4, 8, and 10 were mailed to System Test Coordinators September 9.

- Please distribute these in a timely manner (by October 31, 2009).
- In the shipment are letters to accompany the Parent/Student Reports for students who participated in the CRT with a nonstandard accommodation (s).
  - Please copy the letter as needed and send it **ONLY** with reports that include the section symbol (§) indicating a nonstandard accommodation (s). If a report has this symbol, the letter should accompany the report home.
  - Please **do not** send the letter with all reports. Thank you.

## 2009 CRT and CRT-Alternate Interpretive Guide

- Hard copies of the *Guide* were included in the mailing. It is also online: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/Phase2.html#Interp>

## CRT Test Development Events



You are invited and encouraged to nominate yourself and/or others to participate in these sessions in Helena.

- Training is included at each session
- Lodging is provided for participants living 90 miles or more away from Helena. In addition, mileage, meals not provided during the sessions, and substitute pay are reimbursed. For the June meetings, honoraria are provided. Renewal units are also available.
- The table on page 7 lists events for April and June 2010.
- We look forward to hearing from you soon. Nomination is online at the following link:

<http://iservices.measuredprogress.org/Default.asp?ProgramID=11&submit1=Enter>



<b>Date</b>	<b>Test Development Events</b>
<b>April 12, 2010</b>	CRT Item Bias Review: Montana educators review the 2011 field test items for bias and sensitivity issues. Reading and Math, Grades 3-8 and 10 Science, Grades 4, 8, and 10
<b>April 13-14, 2010</b>	CRT Item Content Review: Montana educators review the 2011 field test items for their content, alignment to Montana standards, and depth of knowledge. Reading and Math, Grades 3-8 and 10 Science, Grades 4, 8, and 10
<b>June 29-30, 2010</b>	Final item statistical review for the 2011 operational CRT. Reading and Math, Grades 3-8 and 10 Science, Grades 4, 8, and 10

## **English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELP)**

### **2009-2010 ELP Materials/Training Schedule**

Please contact Karen Richem if you have any questions: [krichem@mt.gov](mailto:krichem@mt.gov) or 406-444-0748

September 14 - October 16, 2009	System Test Coordinators provide training for test administrators.
September 1 - October 16	Schools enter enrollment and program participation data for all students in AIM System during AIM Beginning of Year Collection. To receive testing labels, please enter and verify LEP students.
October 5, 2009	Questar ships testing materials to System Test Coordinators.
<b>October 19-November 20, 2009</b>	<b>English Language Proficiency (ELP) Testing Window</b>
October 30, 2009	OPI sends Questar the list of students identified as LEP in AIM so Questar can print barcode labels for the students. AIM must be updated no later than October 29, 2009 in order to receive barcode labels for students.
November 9, 2009	Questar mails barcode labels to systems (2 <sup>nd</sup> day delivery).
December 4, 2009	Deadline for systems to ship testing materials to Questar.
February 2010	Questar ships reports to System Test Coordinators

## Other Important Information



### Schools Needed to Participate in Grant Pilot Test

With your help and a grant from the United States Department of Education, the Office of Public Instruction is studying assessments based on modified achievement standards.

The project, researching a scaffolded online test, is intended to improve state tests by identifying aspects that can be adapted for students with IEPs who are eligible for a Criterion Referenced Assessment based on Modified Academic Achievement Standards (CRT-M, the “2% option”).

We think you will be excited about the opportunities this format provides for students with IEPs who struggle with the general assessment. The Measured Progress site (<http://iservices.measuredprogress.org/>) will provide you with an opportunity to indicate your system/schools’ interest in participating in the pilot test.

- Students (both IEP and a random sample of general education) will take the test on computers.
- The tests are in Reading and Math in grade 7 and Math in grade 8.
- Each test consists of three sessions, and it is anticipated that students will need approximately 30-60 minutes per session – approximately 90-180 minutes per test.
- Each student will take only one test.
- Participation Incentives
  - Your school will contribute to the decisions that the OPI will make to determine the best way to address the needs of students with disabilities in MontCAS.
  - Headphones will be provided for each participating student. The school may elect to keep them or give them to participating students.
  - Each school will have the opportunity to be entered into a drawing for one of four computers. Winners will be announced after participation of general and eligible IEP students is confirmed at the end of the test administration window.

### Important dates

October 9 -27, 2009	Schools indicate an interest to participate at <a href="http://iservices.measuredprogress.org/">http://iservices.measuredprogress.org/</a>
October 27- November 18, 2009	Student registration window; A list of students (with IEPs and in general education) will be posted for schools or systems to access using their MARS user names and passwords at <a href="http://iservices.measuredprogress.org">http://iservices.measuredprogress.org</a>
November 18, 2009	Deadline for parents to request removal of their child from the pilot test. OPI and Measured Progress will provide letters for parents.
January 6-February 26, 2010	Test Administration Window





This is an opportunity to build a bridge between research and classrooms. We hope you will consider this important pilot and access more details which are online in both a memo and webinar format at:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/assessment/SpecProj.html>

If you have any questions, please contact Judy Snow, [jsnow@mt.gov](mailto:jsnow@mt.gov) or 444-3656.

*Thank You*



### **Testing Contractor Contact Information**

#### **The CRT and the CRT-Alternate – Measured Progress, Inc.**

Dan Verdick, Montana CRT Program Manager

[dverdick@measuredprogress.org](mailto:dverdick@measuredprogress.org) or 800-431-8901 x2220

Nancy Hall, Montana CRT Program Assistant

[nhall@measuredprogress.org](mailto:nhall@measuredprogress.org) or 888-792-2741

Danielle Hornsby, Montana CRT Program Assistant

[hornsby.danielle@measuredprogress.org](mailto:hornsby.danielle@measuredprogress.org) or 888-792-2741

Lynn Albee, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Manager

[albee.lynn@measuredprogress.org](mailto:albee.lynn@measuredprogress.org) or 800-431-8901x2309

Kevin Froton, Montana CRT-Alternate Program Assistant

[kfroton@measuredprogress.org](mailto:kfroton@measuredprogress.org) or 800-431-8901x2196

#### **The English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessment – Questar Assessment Inc.**

BJ Vickery, Program Manager

[bjvickery@questarai.com](mailto:bjvickery@questarai.com) or 888-854-9596

### **OPI Assessment Staff**

Gayle Allen, Administrative Specialist, [gallen2@mt.gov](mailto:gallen2@mt.gov), 406-444-3511

Karen Richem, Assessment Specialist, [krichem@mt.gov](mailto:krichem@mt.gov), 406-444-0748

Judy Snow, State Assessment Director, [jsnow@mt.gov](mailto:jsnow@mt.gov), 406-444-3656

FAX: 406-444-0743

